

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

in the Polish army.³⁵ By using *agents provocateurs* and infiltrating the Dashnak and Mussavatist organizations in Iran, the G.P.U. was able to obtain valuable data, especially the names of anti-Communist nationalists in the Caucasus, which in turn permitted Soviet authorities to effect a number of arrests there.

As to the Kurdish problem, Moscow seems to have inherited from tsarist Russia a great interest in it. Following old traditions Soviet Russia paid special attention to the Iranian Kurds inhabiting the Lake Urumia region. When the Khan of Maku rose in revolt against the government in 1923, Moscow promptly decided to accredit a Soviet consul to him.³⁰ In 1927 the Soviet government conceived a scheme to create an "independent" Kurdish republic within the Soviet Union, in the area inhabited by Kurds. The creation of such a republic would have effects similar to the creation of the Armenian Republic: Kurdish sympathies in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey would turn toward this little nucleus of Kurdish statehood and, in the event of war with other Powers, Russia would be able to count on support of these warlike tribesmen. Ultimately the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs pronounced itself against this scheme, because of the possible straining of relations between Russia, Iran, and Turkey. Tims the plan was abandoned. Instead it was decided to start an intense

³⁰ It was the magazine *IVschod* ("The East") that propagated the ideas of Pro-metheism in Poland. For typical articles see *Wschod*, no. 19, Nov., 1935, and no. 27, March, 1938. The latter article, "Russian Imperialism in Persia," by Bohdan Halajczuk, comes to the following conclusion in its English summary: "This is understood by Persia, who also knows that her independence can only then be assured and guaranteed when she succeeds in issuing from the status of a buffer

State; this can take place only in the event that the ever potent threat of an insatiable Russia is removed from her frontiers, and when independent Caucasia and Turkestan will block the historical routes followed by Russian imperialism" (p.

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According to Agahekov (*op. cit.*, p. 100) the Polish government was subsidizing nationalist elements of the Caucasus at the rate of f 1,000 monthly, hut these subsidies ceased about 1927.

seBarmine, *op. cit.*, p. 135. The Khanate of Maku is the most strategically situated Kurdish area. It occupies the Sharur-Daralagez and Nakhichevan districts of Iran. Squeezed among Soviet Russia, Turkey, and Iran this tiny khanate provided a transit road for Turkish, Russian, and Dashnak armies in World War I as well as a center of political intrigue. An interesting account of political maneuvers in this area between 1914 and 1919 is contained in the article "Makiyskoyc Khanstvo," *Novy Vostok*, I (1922), 334.